



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

July 16, 2009
7:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers, Upper Level
57 E First Street

Members Present

Adam Decker Chair
Linda Flick Vice Chair
Vern Mathern
Kari Cluff
Dean Taylor
Joe Campbell

Members Absent

Steve Chucri
Gary Gallagher
Gregory Holtz

Others Present

John Wesley
Christine Zielonka
Debbie Archuleta

1. Call to Order

The July 16, 2009 meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, Upper Level 57 E. First Street by Vice – Chair Adam Decker.

2. Approval of Minutes of the May 21, 2009 Meeting:

It was moved by and seconded by to approve the minutes as submitted.

The vote passed unanimously

3. Election of officers

Linda Flick nominated Adam Decker as Chair

Adam Decker nominated Linda Flick Vice-Chair

Vote: Passed 6 – 0

4. HEAR A PRESENTATION, DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

Consideration of modification to the boards involved in the land development process, i.e. Planning and Zoning Board, Downtown Development Committee, and Design Review Board.

Planning Director John Wesley explained the City Council has been discussing the possibility of re-organizing the Downtown Development Committee, the Planning and Zoning Board and the Design Review Board. He stated staff is still in the process of getting input from the various Boards. He was asking for the Boardmembers comments, suggestions, ideas, concerns and thoughts. The goal was to improve the development review process and insure high quality development.

Mr. Wesley provided an overview of the proposal to combine the Downtown Development Committee and the Planning and Zoning Boards. Following that presentation he asked for comments from the committee.

Chair Adam Decker asked if things were underway to establish a sub-committee of the Planning and Zoning Board to focus on Downtown issues. And would this Board slot into that role as a sub-committee to Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Wesley responded that the Planning and Zoning Board had not discussed that at their July 15, 2009 meeting. The idea would be to have the sub-committees come from the Planning and Zoning Board similar to how the Council does. The idea was not to have additional people for the sub-committees. But that could be different. It could be that different members of the Planning and Zoning Board would chair committees with other people.

Committee member Linda Flick commented that she had sent her comments to Christine Zielonka and asked her to send them on to the Council. She was concerned with support for downtown businesses and said the Downtown Development Committee had been very supportive in trying to facilitate good, quality development for downtown, and providing a clear path to do so. Obviously, things have slowed down, but in the past some developers thought they could get lost in the bigger planning and zoning process, and thought their projects were nurtured and helped through it. She had worked with the village planning process in Phoenix. It is a good process, it encompasses both Planning and Design Review. There is a predictability about the outcome so that might be something that might be helpful. She thought it sounded like a foregone conclusion, she hated to see the Committee disbanded because she thought there was value that was brought to it.

Christine Zielonka responded to Linda, she did not think this was a forgone conclusion. The reason they were there was to get comment from the Boards to

take back to Council. There hasn't been a vote at Council and there was a good discussion at the June 4th Council meeting. Staff wants the input of the Downtown Development Committee and the Planning and Zoning Board to share with Council.

Mr. Wesley responded that the economic development staff worked closely with planning staff to transfer their knowledge and to try to replicate the previous process. Certainly the current Council in their list of strategic initiatives the downtown is one of the key areas on their list. There will continue to be an emphasis on the downtown area.

Chair Decker commented in support of the Downtown Development Committee, he thought that their model was a great model as far as efficiency, as far as interaction, it seemed there were less hurdles involved with them, as far as development getting done in the downtown. He always felt that taking their micro approach as opposed to the macro approach to the City would be a more efficient, better way of influencing the development in Mesa. He did not think the Committee should be disbanded, he thought the economy would pick up and there would be development here again, and we will be so busy that the City will need a Downtown Development Committee. If the Committee does go away, take a look at how they manage things, and see that gets applied to the area outside their stewardship.

Mr. Wesley responded they heard the same comment at Planning and Zoning the night before and will be bringing the model of how this Committee works into the processes to make things as seamless and expeditious for the applicants as we can. Staff may be doing things behind the scenes, but for the applicant they have one Board they are going to and moving on through the system.

Committee member Kari Cluff commented that she has been on the committee only a short time, but she has been impressed with the process and impressed with the fact that they do have something that is focused on downtown. The City wants the downtown to be a key factor in the City, so will we accomplish that goal by eliminating the Downtown Development Committee and taking away the opportunity to focus on that. By eliminating the Committee is the City taking one more thing away that we will want again when the economy turns around.

Committee member Mathern commented that with light rail coming we will need people who have knowledge and experience on the development issues that will arise.

Chair Decker asked if, with the village plan and having additional sub-committees, those are additional meetings and additional notes, would there really be a savings on staff time, or is it just a different structure?

Mr. Welsey responded those would be future options and would probably require additional staff.

Chair Decker confirmed today's plan would not include a sub-committee for downtown, or a village plan. Those would be future options.

John Wesley then explained the proposed modification to the Design Review Board.

Linda Flick confirmed that the Design Review Board would be giving staff feedback on cases that have been approved, not making recommendations that could change what the applicant is required to do. She confirmed the consultant architect would be outsourced. She applauded the effort. She stated that through the village concept plan in Phoenix, they look at the uniqueness of the village. She thought that if there is good qualified staff they can work with the applicants and give them direction. She thought this would be an enhancement to the development process in Mesa.

5. Adjournment

With there being no further business, this meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wesley, Secretary
Planning Director

DA:
I:\P&Z\P&Z 09\Minutes\shell.doc